

Introduces Resolution Recognizing Sacrifice of Troops Serving

October 7, 2009

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) -- the highest ranking military officer ever elected to Congress who led operational commands in Afghanistan and now serves on the House Armed Services Committee -- acknowledged the conclusion of the 8th year of operations in Afghanistan by introducing H. Res 802, which recognizes the sacrifice and contributions of United States service members and their families in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“The 1.9 million brave men and women who have worn the cloth of our nation in support of overseas contingency operations, including Operation Enduring Freedom, deserve our deepest respect for their sacrifice and contribution. To mark the start of the 9th year of operations in Afghanistan— and to recognize the service of those heroes— I have introduced a House Resolution which gives thanks for these men and women’s tireless efforts for our nation,” said Congressman Sestak.

American service men and women continue to face a significant enemy in and around Afghanistan. Although the public and policy makers alike are weary of war and wary of quagmire, it is vital to avoid past mistakes and continue to support our troops in this all-important task at hand. Allocating the appropriate resources toward, and setting clear and attainable benchmarks for Operation Enduring Freedom will mark the first time the front line in the war against terrorism has been given the attention it warrants.

Opponents of increasing combat troops have proposed accelerating training of Afghan forces instead. Bolstering army and police units will be a centerpiece of the new strategy, but alone will not be sufficient. Hastily assembled and poorly trained units are unreliable and often do more harm than good. As we broaden our commitment in the region, we must also narrow the mission. Establishing good governance and functional democracy in Afghanistan will, as their recent election has demonstrated, be an ongoing process. But it is a problem for the Afghan people to resolve and cannot be imposed by our forces.

American troops in and around Afghanistan are indispensable in the fight against Al Qaeda.

They and their families are making great sacrifices to keep the United States safe. They are fighting the enemy that struck us on 9/11. They deserve the continued support and admiration of the American people.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clintons Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.